

Example 5.

$$r = 2 \sin(\theta)$$

Find the Arc Length!

Note, letting θ range from 0 to 2π traces the curve (here it is a circle) TWICE.

We get the curve traced ONCE by letting θ range from 0 to π .

Next calculate:

$$\frac{dr}{d\theta} := \frac{d}{d\theta}(2 \sin(\theta)) = 2 \cos(\theta)$$

Now for the Arc Length:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Arc Length} &= \int_{\theta=\alpha}^{\theta=\beta} \sqrt{r^2 + \left(\frac{dr}{d\theta}\right)^2} d\theta \\ &= \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\pi} \sqrt{(2 \sin(\theta))^2 + (2 \cos(\theta))^2} d\theta \\ &= \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\pi} \sqrt{4(\sin^2 \theta + \cos^2 \theta)} d\theta \\ &= \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\pi} \sqrt{4(1)} d\theta = \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\pi} 2 d\theta \\ &= 2\theta \Big|_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\pi} = 2(\pi - 0) = \boxed{2\pi}. \end{aligned}$$

The arc length of a circle is just the circumference of the circle.

The circumference of a circle with radius r is $2\pi r$.

Our circle $r = 2 \sin \theta$ has radius 1 and so its circumference is $2\pi \cdot 1 = 2\pi$.

Example 6. Express the arc length of $r = 2 + 2 \sin \theta$ as an integral with respect to θ .

We trace the curve ONCE by letting θ range from 0 to 2π .

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Arc Length} &= \int_{\theta=\alpha}^{\theta=\beta} \sqrt{r^2 + \left(\frac{dr}{d\theta}\right)^2} d\theta \\ &= \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=2\pi} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + \left(\frac{dr}{d\theta}\right)^2} d\theta \end{aligned}$$

next calculate: $\frac{dr}{d\theta} = \frac{d}{d\theta} (2 + 2 \sin \theta) = 0 + 2 \cos \theta = 2 \cos \theta$ and so we get

$$= \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=2\pi} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta$$

and using symmetry, we can also express as

$$\begin{aligned} &= 2 \left[\text{arc length in the 4}^{\text{th}} \text{ and 1}^{\text{st}} \text{ Quadrants} \right] \\ &= 2 \left[\int_{\theta=\frac{3\pi}{2}}^{\theta=2\pi} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta + \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\frac{\pi}{2}} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta \right] \\ &= 2 \left[\int_{\theta=-\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\theta=0} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta + \int_{\theta=0}^{\theta=\frac{\pi}{2}} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta \right] \\ &= 2 \left[\int_{\theta=-\frac{\pi}{2}}^{\theta=\frac{\pi}{2}} \sqrt{(2 + 2 \sin \theta)^2 + (2 \cos \theta)^2} d\theta \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Example 7. Express the arc length of the little loop of $r = 1 + 2 \cos \theta$ as an integral with respect to θ .

To trace just the “little loop” of the curve we let θ range from $\frac{2\pi}{3}$ to $\frac{4\pi}{3}$.

Next calculate:

$$\frac{dr}{d\theta} := \frac{d}{d\theta}(1 + 2 \cos(\theta)) = 0 + (-1)2 \sin(\theta) = -2 \sin(\theta)$$

Now for the Arc Length:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Arc Length} &= \int_{\theta=\alpha}^{\theta=\beta} \sqrt{r^2 + \left(\frac{dr}{d\theta}\right)^2} d\theta \\ &= \int_{\theta=\frac{2\pi}{3}}^{\theta=\frac{4\pi}{3}} \sqrt{(1 + 2 \cos(\theta))^2 + (-2 \sin(\theta))^2} d\theta . \end{aligned}$$